

Suffield, Connecticut

Approved by Bd. of Ed. 06/01/2026

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Suffield High School Library Media Center
and via Zoom Webinar
May 4, 2026

Call to Order

Board Chair Sattan called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Board members Debra Dudack, Brian Fry, James Mol, Dustin Rose, Maureen Sattan, and Greg Sparzo; and Superintendent Matt Dunbar, Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., and Business Manager Eric Remington

Absent: Melissa Finnigan, Gianna Rossi, Sam Toskin

Recognition

A. Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Student Recognition Award
Superintendent Dunbar provided details of the award and its purpose, recognizing students for leadership, service, and character. The Suffield Middle School CAPSS recipient is Lorelei Grant. Principal Smith said Lorelei was recognized as a quiet leader who demonstrates humility, service and strong character. The Suffield High School CAPSS recipient is Anna Griffin. Principal Anthony Hibbert said Anna was recognized for her academic excellence, leadership in Future Farmers of America (FFA), and community contributions.

B. Suffield High School Class of 2026 Salutatorian

The Suffield High School Class of 2026 Salutatorian is Anwesha Chandra. Principal Hibbert spoke of Anwesha's extensive academic and extracurricular achievements.

C. Suffield High School Class of 2026 Valedictorian

The Suffield High School Class of 2026 Valedictorian is Noora Khaled. Principal Hibbert spoke of Noora's leadership, academic excellence, and involvement in robotics, drama, and leadership programs.

Suffield High School Student Representatives

Lucy McCoy, Class of 2027, shared the news and events at McAlister Intermediate School and A. Ward Spaulding School. Student Representative McCoy reported that many field trips and concerts are scheduled across grades. ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) Day will take place on May 6 at Spaulding School. McAlister Intermediate School will begin SBAC testing.

Olivia Mishtal, Class of 2026, shared the news and events at Suffield High School and Suffield Middle School. Student Representative Mishtal highlighted the numerous high school field trips, AgSci Expo, and National Honor Society Blood Drive. Upcoming events include concerts, theater performances, and a Multicultural Night on May 20.

Student Representative Mishtal shared her student perspective supporting equitable recognition concerning graduation cords across all honor societies.

Public Comment

Nayandeep Tummalapally, Suffield High School Class of 2026, advocated for graduation cords for all honor societies, citing equal standards, commitment, and recognition of student achievement.

Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack congratulated the recognized students. She thanked staff for the educational trips and experiences offered to students. She thanked Jonathan Costa of EdAdvance for the recent Board training, expressed support for graduation cords, and encouraged community participation in the upcoming budget vote.
- Board member Fry congratulated the recognized students and thanked their parents. He extended appreciation to town leadership for coming together on the budget. Following a recent Policy Subcommittee meeting, he received feedback from Board members about making U.S. History a requirement for graduation and will address the matter at the next subcommittee meeting.
- Board member Mol recognized the four students for being incredible role models. He thanked the students for their public comments regarding the graduation cords. Multicultural Night is May 20 at 6:00 p.m. at Suffield High School and he encourages the community to attend.
- Board member Rose thanked the students for advocating for themselves concerning the graduation cords. He acknowledged the incredible students who were recognized.
- Board member Sparzo was impressed by the caliber of the top students and said it is incredibly rewarding to see students set themselves up for an exciting future.

Reports to the Board

A. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dunbar reported that it is Teacher Appreciation Week and expressed his gratitude for the district's dedicated staff. He provided an update on the state legislative session, including potential new requirements such as a bell-to-bell cell phone ban. The district is closely monitoring final legislation and will review implications once finalized. He said the district advocated for two key legislative items: adjusting the reimbursement calculation for the high school roof project to reflect its true age, and increasing state reimbursement for a potential middle school project. Current reports indicate the reimbursement rate for the middle school project could be increased by approximately 10%. Planning for the middle school project continues, including refinement of educational specifications and cost considerations. A presentation to the Board and town stakeholders is anticipated in the coming month.

Additional potential state funding was discussed, including approximately \$700,000 in education support and a one-time \$500,000 allocation, totaling over \$1.2 million for the town. The impact on the local budget is still being determined.

Assistant Superintendent Laura Norbut, Ed.D., highlighted several student events including a successful AgExpo with student-led tours, participation in the "Multiply Your Options" STEM conference for middle school students, and student presentations at the Liberty Tree ceremony as part of the town's 250th anniversary celebration. Dr. Norbut encouraged community members to save the date of June 5 for the Declaration of Independence Museum at the Hathaway Barn.

Superintendent Dunbar said the bus contract is under legal review, with plans to bring it forward for consideration in early June.

B. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Sattan presented at the Town Budget Hearing and thanked Board members and district staff who attended. Wednesday, May 6 is the Town Budget Vote. The Colliers Working Group will present to the Board on the middle school construction project in the near future. The May 18 Board meeting will include a facility dog presentation. Graduation is scheduled for June 13 and Board member Fry will be the Board representative giving a speech this year. Summer availability will be requested of Board members.

C. Business Manager's Report

Business Manager Eric Remington reported that the district continues to monitor expenditures closely and remains attentive to the several evolving financial factors at the state level. He highlighted that recent state legislative activity may positively impact district finances. There is potential state funding for education, including approximately \$700,000 in Education Cost Sharing (ECS)-related support and an additional one-time allocation of approximately \$500,000, which could help offset local budget pressures. Statewide agriscience funding increases (approximately \$800,000 total), which may provide some level of additional support to Suffield's program, though specific allocations are not yet determined. Proposed universal free breakfast program funding, which, if implemented, could increase revenue in the district's food services program.

Transportation updates highlighted the district's strong partnership with M&J Bus Inc., including support following a vehicle loss. The district recognized transportation staff on Bus Driver Appreciation Day and food services staff on Food Service Hero Day.

Facilities updates included progress on several capital projects. The high school HVAC project is scheduled to begin immediately after graduation. The roof project is pending state grant approval, after which bidding will begin. The photovoltaic project requires a revised town resolution before resubmission for funding.

Additional projects at Spaulding School are underway, though major bathroom renovations are not expected to be completed this summer. The high school floor replacement began over April break and will continue after the school year ends. The district anticipates completing several other maintenance projects over the summer months.

D. Board of Selectmen Liaison's Report

None

E. Board of Finance Liaison's Report

None

Approval of Minutes

MOTION #26-68: Dudack moved, Mol seconded to approve the Board of Education regular meeting minutes of April 6 and April 20, 2026. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Consent Agenda

MOTION #26-69: Fry moved to approve the following on the consent agenda:

A. Policy #5123.3 Graduation Ceremony

Dudack seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Olivia Mishtal and Lucy McCoy exited the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Discussion/Action Items

A. Suffield Middle School Year End Review

Principal Smith provided an overview of the 2025-26 progress, key achievements, and priorities for Suffield Middle School. The year emphasized strengthening instructional practices, enhancing student supports, and improving the overall student experience.

Academic initiatives included significant professional development in mathematics, including implementation of Illustrative Math and *Building Thinking Classrooms* practices; a shift in math interventions from remediation to acceleration, aligning support with grade-level instruction; and the selection of Amplify ELA for pilot implementation in 2026-27, with ongoing curriculum planning.

Program highlights include the expansion of Career & Technical Education (CTE), including community partnerships and student participation in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) competitions. Growth of technology education and robotics, including student-led projects such as the development of an outdoor patio space. Principal Smith reported on the revitalization of the library as a central learning hub, including expanded programming.

Ongoing work includes a continued focus on Tier 1 instruction and alignment of MTSS practices across grade levels. Adjustments to the schedule are being explored as well as the expansion of world language programming. Implementation of the RULER social-emotional framework and analysis of school climate survey data has begun.

Principal Smith said priorities for the 2026-27 school year include the expansion of instructional improvements across all content areas and the launch of Amplify ELA pilot. Math initiatives will continue. He plans to improve data use to inform instruction and expand RULER implementation to students and families. The math department is showing great growth.

Board members thanked Principal Smith and look forward to hearing the results of the school climate survey. They asked what supports are needed or wanted for Suffield Middle School.

B. Suffield High School Year End Review

Principal Hibbert provided a year-end review of Suffield High School. He highlighted strong student outcomes, including six National Merit Scholarship qualifiers, an unusually high number, reflecting both student performance and instructional quality. The school has made significant progress reducing chronic absenteeism, decreasing from 25% to approximately 15%, with continued improvement projected. Strategies include weekly attendance meetings, individualized plans, and coordinated support from counseling and support staff. A new SAT Prep Academy was implemented.

Instructional improvements include a focus on strengthening Tier 1 instruction through modeled professional development emphasizing engagement strategies, lesson structure, and effective closure practices. Increased peer collaboration and classroom observation opportunities are building staff capacity and trust. The *Building Thinking Classrooms* initiative continues the implementation of student-centered, problem-based learning, particularly in mathematics, with expansion across content areas. This initiative promotes student engagement, ownership, and high-order thinking skills.

Principal Hibbert said staff training in RULER practices has been completed, with plans to expand implementation to students next year to support emotional regulation and school culture. Academic supports and intervention include the introduction of an Algebra 1 Lab to support struggling students, with plans to refine the model using an acceleration approach. Exploration of additional academic support time during the school day is underway. Investment in facilities such as the STEAM room has enhanced student engagement and hands-on learning opportunities. Continued efforts are focused on building staff trust and consistency in instructional practices.

Ongoing priorities include further reducing chronic absenteeism, deepening implementation of *Building Thinking Classrooms*, expanding systemic instructional practices across all classrooms, and improving access to academic supports for non-identified students.

Board members expressed support for instructional shifts toward problem-based learning and appreciation for progress in attendance and student engagement. They provided feedback regarding program of studies navigation, schedule flexibility, and access to counseling information.

C. March Financial Report

Mr. Remington presented the March Financial Report and reported a projected deficit of approximately \$172,000. He said the deficit may be offset through available funds in several budget categories, including instructional supplies, athletics, and textbooks. Approximately \$538,000 remains uncommitted as of the end of March and the district is expected to finish the year at or near break-even, with the potential for a small surplus. Facilities and maintenance needs continue to be addressed.

D. Discussion and Possible Action on Non-Lapsing Account

MOTION #26-70: Mol moved, Sparzo seconded that the Suffield Board of Education hereby transfers \$71,405.00 of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 surplus to the Board of Education Non-Lapsing Education Account, said balance not to exceed two percent (2%) of the Board of Education's annual appropriation. All members voted in favor. The motion passed **6-0-0**.

Board members questioned where the non-lapsing funds were held.

Subcommittee Reports

- A. April 24, 2026 – Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting – Board Chair Sattan said the subcommittee reviewed high school course offerings, including an audit of courses offered and those that did not run. Discussion included updates on career clusters and their alignment with state accountability measures, as well as efforts to modernize CTE programming. The subcommittee discussed expanding opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized credentials.
- B. April 30, 2026 – Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting – Board Chair Sattan said topics were largely covered in the Business Manager's report.

Board Liaison Reports

- A. Capital Region Education Council (CREC) – No report
- B. Agriscience – Board member Mol highlighted the recent Agriscience Expo, noting strong student participation and positive community engagement. The annual FFA Awards will take place on May 14 and will include a silent auction. The May Market is being held on May 16 and on May 21 students will plant geraniums at the cemetery. The 60th Anniversary of the Suffield Regional Agriscience Program will take place on May 29.

Future Business

None

Public Comment

None

Board Member Comment

- Board member Dudack appreciated the district's focus on the upcoming Multicultural Night. She expressed her thanks to the district teachers and nurses in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week and National Nurses Week. She looks forward to learning more about the Suffield Middle School building project and thanked the secondary principals for their reports. She suggested incorporating a mission moment, which is something Jonathan Costa had suggested.
- Board member Mol thanked M&J Bus Inc. for their continued partnership with Suffield Public Schools.

Adjournment

Fry moved, Mol seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Click here to view the meeting: [04MAY2026 BOE Regular Meeting](#)

Minutes are subject to approval at the regular meeting of June 1, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sattan
Board of Education Chair